



EBOLA RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IOWA BUSINESSES

The Ebola Outbreak in West Africa continues to be in the headlines, and recently there has been extensive media coverage of the handful of cases that have occurred in the United States. It's understandable that Iowans may be concerned about this serious disease; however, it is important to ensure that fear does not take over and negatively impact Iowa communities. For these reasons, Iowa Department of Public Health has developed the following recommendations.

- 1. Consult public health officials before making decisions that might lead to the exclusion of employees.**
Employees that have recently returned (in the past 21 days) from the countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia are being assessed by the Iowa Department of Public Health to determine potential risk of Ebola. Public health officials have the necessary scientific information and medical expertise for assessing who has been exposed (or potentially exposed) to the Ebola virus, determining what actions are appropriate such as isolation or quarantine, as well as having the legal authority to order these actions and ensuring those actions are carried out. Most returning travelers are at very low risk of Ebola, and therefore are allowed to return to their normal activities with no risk to those around them. **The priority of public health officials is to protect the communities they serve and stop serious infectious diseases from spreading.**
- 2. Do not exclude employees just because someone in their household or a close contact recently returned from a country in Africa within the last 21 days where widespread transmission of Ebola is occurring (i.e. Guinea, Sierra Leone, or Liberia).**
These employees pose no risk to others in the workplace, and can continue to work. The household members returning from Ebola affected countries will be assessed twice daily by public health to ensure they remain well. In the event that a contact of the employee becomes ill, IDPH will evaluate the employee's exposure level to the ill contact and take action, as needed.
- 3. Do not exclude employees who travel to countries in Africa where widespread transmission of Ebola is **NOT** occurring. (As of Nov. 10, widespread transmission of Ebola is only occurring in Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.)**
Persons who travel to other areas of Africa or other areas of the world (where widespread transmission of Ebola is **NOT** occurring) are at no greater risk of developing Ebola than non-traveling employees.
- 4. Do not take extra measures (i.e., enhanced cleaning) to specifically address Ebola.**
No extra cleaning measures need to occur in your facilities to specifically address Ebola; however, influenza and norovirus are often circulating in businesses over the winter months and should be the focus of your illness prevention and control efforts. To decrease these illnesses in your facility, consider additional cleaning of frequently touched surfaces and encourage employees to remain at home while ill.
- 5. Do call public health officials to discuss any questions or concerns you have about Ebola.**
Public health officials are responsible for providing sound, science-based information to community partners. Please contact your local or state public health officials if you have any questions or concerns.
- 6. Further information can be found at these websites:**
www.idph.state.ia.us/EHI/Issue.aspx?issue=Ebola%20Outbreak&pg=Ebola%20Outbreak%20Home. (IDPH)
www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html (CDC)